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1975/05/12

MEMORANDUM

25... (Redo)

new type
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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

May 12, 1975

Tab I yw dead
5-13



MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT
FROM: LES JANKA *[Signature]*
SUBJECT: Redo of Response to Senator Stennis

Jack Marsh had a few changes to recommend in our original response to Senator Stennis (Tab C) and our package was held up by Jerry Jones to the point where it became outdated.

We pulled the whole package back and a fully coordinated new response is at Tab A.

RECOMMENDATION

That you resubmit the memo to the President at Tab I suggesting that he sign the letter to Stennis at Tab A.

Declassified

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

5/12/75

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your letter of April 16 requested the text of all documents regarding the negotiation and subsequent implementation of the 1973 Paris Agreement on Vietnam. This request was based on the possible relevance to your Committee's hearings of the nature and extent of any U.S. understandings or commitments which may have been given to North or South Vietnam.

Unfortunately, intervening events delayed a response to your letter, and those events have now made it unnecessary for the Congress to consider further the Administration's request of April 10 for additional military assistance to South Vietnam.

With specific reference to your concern about private U.S. commitments to South Vietnam, you will recall that President Nixon and members of his Administration stated publicly and repeatedly that the U.S. intended to continue its aid relationship with the Republic of Vietnam and react vigorously to violations of the ceasefire agreement. Diplomatic exchanges reflected this policy and the intent to maintain the conditions essential to observance of the Agreement. Requests for security assistance and opposition to the 1973 prohibition on the use of military force were presented and argued on the merits of policy, in the belief that it was in our national interest to maintain the conditions necessary to the viability of the Agreement. Our policy and our actions in Indochina were determined by this view of our interests, not by commitments or assurances given only in private



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and not by "secret agreements" or assurances given in any secret document. Obviously, our ability to carry out this policy was subject to our own Constitutional process.

Any documents which could be construed to contain or constitute a government-to-government undertaking have been provided to the Congress.

I do not believe, therefore, that there is any basis for misunderstanding about American obligations or actions relative to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Nor is this issue relevant to our foreign policy in the future. Inasmuch as confidentiality is an essential aspect of diplomatic intercourse, the diplomatic exchanges between the United States and South Vietnam and North Vietnam should remain confidential within the Executive Branch. Our urgent task now is to face the future and leave the divisive debates over Vietnam behind us.

Sincerely,

The Honorable John Stennis
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510